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Family Self-Sufficiency Newsletter

Be Happy With What You Have and Still Want More

by Tammy Parker, FSS Coordinator

Your desire for something more drives you. It motivates you to get out of bed in the morning, to put in the long hours and fight through the stress and setbacks. It allows you to ignore the messages you receive that say you will fail.

Wanting more than what you have can be a double-edged sword though. It can rob you of today's happiness because you are not quite content with where you are. How can you want more while being happy with what you have now?

#1: Understand that to want more is to be human

What motivates us changes over time, but the drive for continuous improvement is a common human trait. When you accomplish something your brain releases a small dose of dopamine, a type of neurotransmitter that effects motivation, learning, and mood. It helps you feel pleasure; it allows you to focus, to strive to complete tasks, and to find things interesting. After accomplishing something, even as small as checking an item off your to-do list, you'll get a small dose of dopamine, which propels you forward to do and accomplish even more.

#2: Seek balance and moderation

Like most things though, too much of a good thing can be a bad thing. This is where balance and moderation come in. Sometimes your inner drive for accomplishment and goal-setting can have a negative impact. You might end up running in circles, chasing that next high.

#3: Practice gratitude and patience

Express gratitude for all that you have. You have many things to be thankful for. You are alive, and you can read this newsletter. There is a lot to be thankful for if you look in the right places.



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Continued: **Be Happy With What You Have and Still Want More,** *Tammy Parker*

Express gratitude for what you do not have. When viewed correctly this can be a blessing. Do you have poor health? Are you still in a negative relationship? Do you have an empty refrigerator and wondering where your next meal is coming from? No? Be thankful!

Be patient. Do not passively wait for the good things to happen to you, but take an active role in making them happen. Know that all good things will come in their due time. Be patient. You won't get there today, and probably not even tomorrow. Nothing truly worthwhile is accomplished so easily. Eventually though, you will get there.

#4: Look both ways

Sure, look out the front window while you are driving down the road, but do not forget to enjoy the scenery along the way. Take the opportunity to glance in the rear-view mirror too and appreciate where you've been. Attempt to implement these 4 practices to be happy with what you have in life while still wanting more for yourself.

“Everything you need is on its way. It will get here when it is supposed to and it will be better than you imagined.”
Wayne Dyer

Adapted from “4 Ways To Be Happy With What You Have While Still Wanting More: How to overcome one of life’s greatest challenges,” Chris Schatz. Ed.D, 4/9/2020, <https://medium.com/afwp/4-ways-to-be-happy-with-what-you-have-while-still-wanting-more-ac6818d3ee0a>

Congratulations to our Fall 2022 FSS Graduates!

The Family Self-Sufficiency program is pleased to announce that eight participants graduated from our program between June and August this year. Collectively, they earned a total of \$45,358!

Introducing Our New FSS Coordinator, Ariana Brault

Ariana Brault comes to us with her Bachelor of Social Work from Eastern Washington University, with minors in psychology and sociology. She received her Master of Social Work (MSW) in 2020 from Boise State University and is currently working on her MSW licensure. She has spent most of her career in housing and homelessness in the southwest Washington area.



Ariana has been with BCACHA for over a year and was recently promoted from Housing Case Manager to FSS Coordinator. The favorite part of her role is to witness clients' achieve the goals they set for themselves while providing coping skills and resources in order for them to live a happy, healthy, and successful life – bringing a strengths-based perspective and motivational interviewing.

Upcoming FSS Events to Watch For

October: October 6, 2022 Virtual Workshop - “Holiday Generosity Without the New Year Spending Hangover” Presented by our partners at MoneyFit.org

November: *November workshop
To Be Announced*

December: “Toys for Tots” The Marines will be assisting our FSS families with TOYS FOR TOTS! Our agency is applying for Toys for Tots in October so that you will be able to receive your toys before Christmas. We will be mailing out applications soon so watch your mailbox.

Contact your Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator to learn how you can participate in any of our workshops or events.

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Seasonal Affective Disorder *by Ariana Brault, FSS Coordinator*

As fall approaches, you may tend to see your moods shifting gears or feel like you're not your typical self. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) or Seasonal Depression is a form of depression and also known as the winter blues. Symptoms can start in the fall and seem to suppress in the spring or summer months. However, it can be the opposite for some. Regardless, symptoms may start out mild and become more severe as the season progresses, lasting 4 to 5 months per year.

Often sadness and irritability symptoms may include oversleeping, increased appetite, craving carbohydrates or sugar, social withdrawal and low energy. For some, people can tend to see a pattern of being sluggish at the same time each year. Therefore, not all persons with SAD will show all signs and symptoms and may differ between winter-pattern and summer-pattern.

Signs and symptoms of SAD may include:

- Feeling listless, sad or down most of the day, nearly every day
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Having low energy and feeling sluggish
- Having problems with sleeping too much
- Experiencing carbohydrate cravings, overeating and weight gain
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty
- Having thoughts of not wanting to live

Symptoms to winter-onset SAD may include:

- Oversleeping
- Appetite changes, especially a craving for foods high in carbohydrates
- Weight gain
- Tiredness or low energy

Symptoms to summer-onset seasonal affective disorder, may include:

- Trouble sleeping (insomnia)
- Poor appetite
- Weight loss
- Agitation or anxiety
- Increased irritability (National Institute of Mental Health, 2022).

For treatment, therapists and doctors may recommend a number of therapy and tools; light therapy, psychotherapy, and or medications. Here are some activities you can do at home to help with self-care and those winter blues:

- Implement a sleep schedule and routine, try sleeping 8 hours and going to sleep and waking on schedule. This can give you more energy and help balance your mood.
- Stress management techniques – Don't overcommit yourself, mindfulness and meditation (i.e. mindful breathing), and taking part in things you enjoy to help you relax.
- Get outside – go on a nature walk or hike to expose yourself to the sun or take a sunny vacation to someplace warm.
- Spend time in the sun – Even when sunny vacations are not possible, you can open your blinds to let natural light flow into your space. Consider working, reading, or doing your other tasks near a window early in the day even if it's winter and cold outside.
- Healthy balanced diet – try avoiding comfort foods such as chocolate, chips, and candy. You may also talk with your doctor about taking vitamin D supplements.
- Exercise regularly – physical activity can boost mood and reducing stress by stimulating endorphins in your brain.
- Lastly, track your mood & activities – keep a daily journal or write it down on a calendar. Note when your feelings began and what triggered them. This helps you identify patterns, allowing you to manage them in the future. You can also find relief as you work through them immediately.

References:

Shelly, M. (n.d.). *How to cope with seasonal depression*. Aetna. Retrieved September 13, 2022, from <https://www.aetna.com/health-guide/how-to-manage-seasonal-depression.html>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *Seasonal affective disorder*. National Institute of Mental Health. Retrieved September 13, 2022, from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder>

Keeping Your Kids Busy and Productive During Winter Break

by Katie Isola, FSS Coordinator

Soon the kids will be off school for their winter break. Having kids home from school can present an interesting challenge if there is not already a plan in place, such as a trip or vacation. It is a bit more difficult than when they are home in the summer and can be sent outside to play. Winter break can require some planning to keep your children occupied and happy.

Not only is it important to keep our kids active and busy over breaks for their minds, but also for their overall physical wellbeing. Technology has taken over our children's world, and while it may be easy to let them sit on their iPad, phone or computer all day, they are not developing necessary life skills such as socialization, promoting positive relationships with others, learning to gain confidence in themselves, teamwork skills, and character building skills.

As children transition into life at home for the break, sticking to routines and setting a schedule for your children are the most important things you can do to help your kids stay moving and learning. If they fall too much out of structure, it can make going back to school harder for everyone.

If you do not already have an idea of how to fill your child's time, the following lists may offer you some great ideas for keeping your children busy for hours, both indoors and outdoors, as well as some fun family outings to make winter break more enjoyable for everyone.

Family activities to enjoy together:

- Indian Creek Winter Wonderland- every year, the City of Caldwell decorates Indian Creek in downtown Caldwell with over a million lights!
- Scentsy Commons Christmas Lights- totaling 724,000 of them when they're all lit. That's 43 miles of lights, decorating 450 trees. The Tunnel of Lights features an additional 67,000 lights.
- Take a day trip to Bogus Basin- excellent for a day of skiing, sledding and/or tubing that the entire family can enjoy
- Catch a Christmas parade
- Watch your city or neighboring town's tree lighting ceremonies
- Go to a museum
- Check out the library- many libraries offer special kid's programs during school breaks, so be sure to check your local library's website for any programs your children may enjoy

When the kids are home they can keep busy with these indoor activities:

- Board Games
- Dance Party!
- Inside scavenger hunt
- Make Christmas ornaments
- Bake cookies
- Read a book
- Have a movie marathon of your family favorites
- Create a family time capsule
- Make a snow globe <https://www.familyeducation.com/fun/winter-crafts-activities/snow-globe>

Continued: **Keeping Your Kids Busy and Productive During Winter Break** by *Katie Isola*

When the kids start to get anxious, send them outside to keep busy with outdoor crafts and activities:

- Take a walk
- Build a snowman- enjoyable for every age!
- Create an obstacle course
- Outside scavenger hunt
- Make snowflakes <https://www.todaysparent.com/family/crafts/how-to-make-the-perfect-paper-snowflake-in-45-seconds/#gallery/no-fail-diy-snowflakes-in-45-seconds/slide-1>
- Make ice candles <https://www.familyeducation.com/fun/outdoor-activities/ice-candles>
- Make a snow brick fort <https://www.familyeducation.com/fun/winter-crafts-activities/snow-bricks>



A few strategically placed ice candles or snowflakes can turn your backyard into a winter wonderland, and your children will be excited to show you their completed creation. All of these are all easy to make, and best of all, cost next to nothing. The possibilities are endless! If you need help with additional resources don't hesitate to reach out to your FSS Coordinator.

Book Rich Environments Program by *Katie Isola, FSS Coordinator*

This year, Boise City Ada County Housing Authorities are proud to partner with the National Book Foundation's Book Rich Environments (BRE) program. Since 2017, BRE has distributed over 1.6 million free, high quality, diverse books to public housing residents across the U.S.

In 2022, Book Rich Environments has partnered with 50 HUD-assisted communities, including 8 new sites, to build a strong, vibrant population of readers across the country. As part of the program, Boise City Ada County Housing Authorities received 2,499 books to give away to children and families.

To receive free books for your children, please contact your housing representative or one of the BCACHA's Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinators. We'd appreciate your help in sharing information about the BRE program with your friends, families, and neighbors!

For more information on Book Rich Environments, visit the National Book Foundation's website at: <https://www.nationalbook.org/programs/book-rich-environments/>.

Resources for Families, "Empowering Parents" - family education grant goes live by *Trudy Nebeker, FSS Coordinator*

On September 8, 2022, Idaho Governor Brad Little announced that the Empowering Parents grant was live and accepting applications online. This \$50 million grant is derived from federal coronavirus funds that were set aside for Idaho family education grants. The funding is expected to serve up to 16,000 families who may be eligible for up to \$1,000 per student or \$3,000 per family for education-related expenses. Eligible items include computers, tutoring internet and other needs that promote the educational success of Idaho students. Parents of students who attend public, private or home schools are eligible to apply.



The grants will be awarded in three stages, families with an adjusted gross income of less than \$60,000 per year will be awarded first, followed by those making under \$75,000 and finally families making over \$75,000 will receive awards last. Items purchased will need to fall under specified guidelines and be purchased from authorized vendors. Detailed guidelines, qualifications and applications can be found on the Empowering Parents website: <https://empoweringparents.idaho.gov/>

References: <https://gov.idaho.gov/pressrelease/empowering-parents-go-live-today/>
<https://boardofed.idaho.gov/empowering-parents-program/>
<https://empoweringparents.idaho.gov/>

Winter Preparation

Winter utility bills will soon arrive in our mailboxes, leaving some families wondering how they will stick to an ever tightening budget while the cost of goods, services and utilities continue to increase.

Keeping in mind that the rise in winter utility bills is inevitable, preparing ahead is advisable. Some helpful tips include preparing your budget to include the extra utility expenses, monitoring and adjusting your usage, and winterizing your home now before the weather changes. For budget assistance you can contact your FSS coordinator who can assist and advise or refer you to free financial education opportunities. Listed here are some helpful tips that could save you money on your energy bills at home:

1. Call your utility provider to find out if you qualify for level pay.
2. Change your air filters as recommended.
3. Adjust your thermostat when not home, no need to heat or cool an empty space.
4. Adjust your hot water heater temperature to the recommended 120 degrees. You may need to submit a request to your maintenance department or property manager.
5. Use energy saving LED light bulbs.
6. Cut clothes dryer time down by using a dryer ball.
7. Most clothes can be washed and rinsed in cold water. Don't waste water on partial loads.
8. Use black-out curtains.
9. Check with property manager and if allowed, weather strip your doors and windows.
10. Run your dishwasher at night (some energy companies may charge higher rates for peak hours). Get in the habit of loading it right after dinner to avoid using excess water soaking and rewashing items.

More tips for cutting expenses and saving money can be found online at the Pennyhoarder:
<https://www.thepennyhoarder.com/save-money/how-to-save-money-on-utilities/>

Energy Assistance

For those on a limited income or facing an income crisis you may want to apply for Energy Assistance. You can do this by contacting **El Ada Community Action Partnership** to apply for Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP). More information can be found online at: <https://www.eladacap.org/> or call their energy assistance line: (208) 322-1242.

Help Kids Stay Warm this Winter

KTVB, Fred Meyer, CapEd Credit Union and the Salvation Army are collecting new and gently used coats to help kids in southern Idaho keep warm this winter. You can drop them off at Clothesline Cleaner, Dennis Dillon Treasure Valley locations, or Ferguson & Micron Technology. If you would like to find a gently used coat for your kids or other necessities that you are short on, check out the Salvation Army website or call their Boise Holiday information line: <https://boise.salvationarmy.org/boise2/coat-drive/> or at (208) 433-4428.